CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

In a network, a method of checking connectivity between
 endpoints, said method comprising:

sending a message from an originating endpoint to a first terminating endpoint, said message directing said first terminating endpoint to enable detection of continuity check cells used for checking connectivity between said originating endpoint and said first terminating endpoint, wherein said first terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells; and

sending continuity check cells from said originating endpoint to said first terminating endpoint, wherein said originating endpoint is programmed to refrain from acting in response to an absence of continuity check cells from said first terminating endpoint.

2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said first terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells in response to said message.

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3. The method of Claim 1 wherein said message is a setup message used for setting up communication between said originating endpoint and said first terminating endpoint.

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4. The method of Claim 1 wherein said message is an add-party message for setting up communication between said originating endpoint and a second terminating endpoint over a communication path that has some

commonality with a communication path between said originating endpoint and said first terminating endpoint.

- 5. The method of Claim 1 wherein said originating endpoint5 comprises a switch.
 - 6. The method of Claim 1 wherein said first terminating endpoint is one of multiple terminating endpoints receiving broadcast messages from said originating endpoint in a point-to-multipoint connection.

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- 7. The method of Claim 1 wherein said network is an asynchronous transfer mode network.
- 8. In a network, a method of checking connectivity between endpoints, said method comprising:

receiving at a first terminating endpoint a message sent from an originating endpoint, said message directing said first terminating endpoint to enable detection of continuity check cells used for checking connectivity between said originating endpoint and said first terminating endpoint, wherein said first terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells; and

providing notification to a network manager when continuity check cells from said originating endpoint are not detected.

9. The method of Claim 8 wherein said originating endpoint is programmed to refrain from acting in response to an absence of continuity check cells from said first terminating endpoint.

10. The method of Claim 8 wherein said first terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells in response to said message.

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11. The method of Claim 8 wherein said message is a setup message used for setting up communication between said originating endpoint and said first terminating endpoint.

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12. The method of Claim 8 wherein said message is an add-party message for setting up communication between said originating endpoint and a second terminating endpoint over a communication path that has some commonality with a communication path between said originating endpoint and said first terminating endpoint.

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13. The method of Claim 8 wherein said first terminating endpoint is one of multiple terminating endpoints receiving broadcast messages from said originating endpoint in a point-to-multipoint connection.

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14. A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform a method of checking connectivity between endpoints in a network, said method comprising:

sending a message from an originating endpoint to a first terminating endpoint, said message directing said first terminating endpoint to enable detection of continuity check cells used for checking connectivity between said originating endpoint and said first terminating endpoint, wherein said first

terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells; and

sending continuity check cells from said originating endpoint to said first terminating endpoint, wherein said originating endpoint is programmed to refrain from acting in response to an absence of continuity check cells from said first terminating endpoint.

- 15. The computer-usable medium of Claim 14 wherein said first terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells in response to said message.
- 16. The computer-usable medium of Claim 14 wherein said computer system comprises a switch.
- 17. The computer-usable medium of Claim 14 wherein said first terminating endpoint is one of multiple terminating endpoints receiving broadcast messages from said originating endpoint in a point-to-multipoint connection.
- 18. A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform a method of checking connectivity between endpoints in a network, said method comprising:

receiving at a first terminating endpoint a message sent from an originating endpoint, said message directing said first terminating endpoint to enable detection of continuity check cells used for checking connectivity between said originating endpoint and said first terminating endpoints, wherein

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said first terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells; and

providing notification to a network manager when continuity check cells from said originating endpoint are not detected.

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- 19. The computer-usable medium of Claim 18 wherein said originating endpoint is programmed to refrain from acting in response to an absence of continuity check cells from said first terminating endpoint.
- 10 20. The computer-usable medium of Claim 18 wherein said first terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells in response to said message.
- 21. The computer-usable medium of Claim 18 wherein said first terminating endpoint is one of multiple terminating endpoints receiving broadcast messages from said originating endpoint in a point-to-multipoint connection.
- 22. The computer-usable medium of Claim 18 wherein said computer20 system comprises a switch.
 - 23. A system for checking connectivity between endpoints in a network, said system comprising:

means for sending a message from an originating endpoint to a first terminating endpoint, said message directing said first terminating endpoint to enable detection of continuity check cells used for checking connectivity between said originating endpoint and said first terminating endpoint, wherein

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said first terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells; and

means for sending continuity check cells from said originating endpoint to said first terminating endpoint, wherein said originating endpoint is

programmed to refrain from acting in response to an absence of continuity check cells from said first terminating endpoint.

- 24. The system of Claim 23 wherein said first terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells in response to said message.
- 25. A system for checking connectivity between endpoints in a network, said system comprising:

means for receiving at a first terminating endpoint a message sent from an originating endpoint, said message directing said first terminating endpoint to enable detection of continuity check cells used for checking connectivity between said originating endpoint and said first terminating endpoints, wherein said first terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells; and

means for providing notification to a network manager when continuity check cells from said originating endpoint are not detected.

26. The system of Claim 25 wherein said originating endpoint is programmed to refrain from acting in response to an absence of continuity check cells from said first terminating endpoint.

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- 27. The system of Claim 25 wherein said first terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells in response to said message.
 - 28. The system of Claim 25 further comprising:

means for notifying a network manager when continuity check cells from said originating endpoint are not detected at said first originating endpoint.

- 29. A device comprising:
- a memory unit; and

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a controller coupled to said memory unit, said controller for executing a method of checking connectivity between endpoints in a network, said method comprising:

sending a message to a first terminating endpoint, said message directing said first terminating endpoint to enable detection of continuity check cells used for checking connectivity between said device and said first terminating endpoint, wherein said first terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells;

sending continuity check cells to said first terminating endpoint; and refraining from acting in response to an absence of continuity check cells from said first terminating endpoint.

- 30. The device of Claim 29 wherein said first terminating endpoint is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells in response to said message.
 - 31. The device of Claim 29 wherein said device comprises a switch.

32. The device of Claim 29 wherein said message is a broadcast message sent to multiple terminating endpoints including said first terminating endpoint.

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33. A device comprising:

a memory unit; and

a controller coupled to said memory unit, said controller for executing a method of checking connectivity between endpoints in a network, said method comprising:

receiving a message sent from an originating endpoint, said message directing said device to enable detection of continuity check cells used for checking connectivity between said originating endpoint and said device;

suppressing generation of continuity check cells; and providing notification to a network manager when continuity check cells from said originating endpoint are not detected.

- 34. The device of Claim 33 wherein said originating endpoint is programmed to refrain from acting in response to an absence of continuity check cells from said device.
- 35. The device of Claim 33 wherein said device is programmed to suppress generation of continuity check cells in response to said message.
- 25 36. The device of Claim 33 wherein said device is one of multiple devices receiving broadcast messages from said originating endpoint in a point-to-multipoint connection.